

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 09309 241239Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----036381 241856Z /46

R 241047Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4357
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 9309

EXDIS DIST AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EG, SA, IR, IS, US
SUBJECT: ISRAELI INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING DISCREET CONTACT WITH
THE SAUDI ARABIA CONCERNING SOVIET THREAT

1. DURING BILATERAL MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE AT
LEEDS CASTLE ON JULY 19, FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN ASKED
WHETHER THE SECRETARY SAW ANY POSSIBILITIES IN THE IDEA
OF INITIATING SECRET COOPERATION OR AT LEAST CONSULTATION
AMONG ISRAEL, SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, IRAN AND THE U.S.
WITH RESPECT TO THE GROWING SOVIET THREAT IN AFRICA AND
ELSEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

2. THE SECRETARY SAID HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE CONCEIVABLE
THAT SOME CONVERSATION AMONG THESE PARTIES COULD TAKE
PLACE, BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO FOCUS ON SPECIFIC CASES. HE
DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE SAUDIS WOULD BE INTERESTED.
HOWEVER, AT DAYAN'S REQUEST, HE SAID HE COULD RAISE
THE SUBJECT WHEN HE VISITED SAUDI ARABIA EARLY IN AUGUST.
DAYAN MADE CLEAR THAT WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WAS SOMETHING
EXTREMELY SECRET, FOCUSED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE ON
PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGES AND SO FORTH. HE SAID
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HE FELT CONFIDENT THAT THE IRANIANS WOULD BE WILLING TO
PARTICIPATE; HE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THE SAUDIS OR THE
EGYPTIANS.

3. COMMENT: THIS MAY SEEM A BIT FARFETCHED AT THIS
POINT IN THE PEACE PROCESS, BUT IT IS NOT BY ANY MEANS
THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE HEARD INDICATIONS THAT THE

ISRAELIS ARE BEGINNING TO RETHINK THEIR POSTURE TOWARD
THE SAUDIS IN PARTICULAR. I FEEL SURE THIS IDEA ALSO
STEMS IN PART FROM SECRET CONVERSATIONS WHICH FOREIGN MINISTRY
DIRECTOR GENERAL EVRON HELD IN IRAN EARLIER THIS MONTH.
HE RETURNED FULL OF STORIES OF IRANIAN FOREBODING ABOUT
THE IMPLICATIONS OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTAN,
ETHIOPIA, SOUTH YEMEN AND SO FORTH, WHICH HE SHARED WITH
ME ON A PERSONAL AND HIGHLY SENSITIVE BASIS. I HOPE
THAT THE SECRETARY WILL TAKE THE OCCASION TO MAKE A
SOUNDING WITH THE SAUDIS WHEN NEXT HE VISITS SAUDI ARABIA
TO SEE IF THERE IS ANY INTEREST AT ALL ON SOMETHING
VERY DISCREET IN THE WAY OF CONSULTATIONS WITH THE
ISRAELIS, WHICH COULD OF COURSE BE HANDLED STRICTLY
THROUGH INTELIGENCE CHANNELS IN ORDER TO AVOID LEAKS.
IF IT WERE DONE THAT WAY, I FEEL FAIRLY CONFIDENT THAT
FOR ONCE SOMETHING IN THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD REMAIN OUT
OF THE PUBLIC EYE.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN INTEREST REPRESENTATION, THREATS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV09309
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840157-2643
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780729/aaaaayau.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4843f96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1912347
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING DISCREET CONTACT WITH THE SAUDI ARABIA CONCERNING SOVIET THREAT
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, EG, SA, IR, IS, US, UR, XA
To: STATE CAIRO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4843f96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014